Majo no Tabitabi - Volume 01 Chapter 01-05

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Colored Illustrations

その可憐な少女は魔女であり、旅人でした。
――そう、私です。

The pretty girl was a witch and was a traveler.

灰の魔女イレイナ

弱冠15歳で魔法使いの最高位
『魔女』の称号を得た、天才少女。

「私も忘れませんよ、皆さんのこと」
葬屑の魔女フラン
「あなたの旅を心から応援しています。
どうか、そのことを忘れないで」

English

その可憐な少女は魔女であり、旅人でした。
――そう、私です。

The pretty girl was a witch and was a traveler.

The Witch of Ashes Elaina

A genius girl, who at the young age of 13 years old,
acquired the highest title of magicians - 「Witch」.

I also won't forget about everyone.
THE WITCH OF STARDUST FRAN
I will be cheering for your journey
with all my heart.
Please, don't ever forget that.

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Chapter 1

Chapter 1: A Country of Magicians

Part 1

There existed a quiet country on savage mountains.

Because it was surrounded by tall walls, it was not possible to examine it from the outside.

At the top of the stone surface hot from sunlight, a single broom was flying and cutting through the lukewarm atmosphere as it advanced.

The one manipulating the broom was a single lovely girl. Clad in black robe and a tricorne, her ashen hair was shaking in the wind.

If there were people there, certainly anyone would turn their head wondering who in the world was this breathtakingly beautiful girl.

That's right, It’s me.

Just kidding.

"...Just a bit is left."

The tall walls appeared to be constructed by shaving off what was originally a mountain. Slightly shifting one's line line of sight down, a gate can be seen. I am facing my broom towards it.

Well, it seems like a troublesome place for a country, but, this is their consideration——To not make a mistake and carelessly enter it. After all, unless circumstances called for it, no one would ever come in a country built in such a place.

After arriving at the gate, I descended with the broom. One gate guard who carried out inspections for entering the country came to greet.

After slowly examining me to the tips, he returned his gaze at the brooch on my chest and showed a wry smile.

"Welcome. To the country of Magicians. Please proceed inside, Witch-sama"

"? Eh? That examination was enough to understand whether or not I'm a magician?"

I asked that kind of question. All visitors should show a Magic to pass. If there is not even a single ability, it's not permitted to enter the town.

"It's because I saw you flying here. Besides, that brooch undoubtedly belongs to a Witch. Please proceed inside."

So that's it. That's what it was. Looks like properly flying on the broom was the minimal condition to enter the country. Thinking about it, my location was clearly visible from this gate. So embarrassing.

After giving a small nod to the gate guard, I proceeded to pass through the gate.

Here is the country of Magicians. Mages, Apprentice Witches, Witches——In short, it's a country with a strange rule of not letting anyone other than magicians enter it.

After passing through the gate, I got puzzled.

There were two signboards lined up together.

One of the signboards was an entirely concealed magician extending a broom. Next to it was a walking soldier surrounded by a triangle.

What are these signboards.

But I immediately understood the answer as I looked above——Above the crowded brick houses, or perhaps below the sun, magicians were flying about.

I see - I got it.

It seems to be a special rule of a country that allowed just magicians to enter. Everyone was flying in vicinity, and only a handful of people walked on the ground.

Understanding the meaning of the sign, I took out my broom and sat on it sideways. Kicking the ground, I started to gently float.

If you want to express the meaning of the sign with simple words:

"It's an endorsement to fly in the air, isn't it——"

And thus, the country of magicians truly appeared.

Magicians were flying above the reddish brown roofs that were spread out like a withered land.

Starting from people who stopped brooms and had a friendly chat, people who tied luggage to brooms, an old woman who looked like a suspicious Witch, even the figures of children who dashed in the air having a contest of speed - They seem to be enjoying a life in the sky.

It's a very warming scene. To the point of breathtakingness.

Blending with them, I soared above the country. As I was absentmindedly flying about, I suddenly caught a sight of a signboard that was put above a roof. "Inn" it seems. After passing it, next appeared a word "Greengrocer". Aside from it, there were things like "Butcher" and "Jewelry". As expected, they were for the life among the skies alone. Putting a signboard above the rooftops seems to be a common thing.

Looking closely, there was a window that could pass people one by one embedded on the roofs of most houses. As I gazed at it blankly, a man suddenly jumped out from the inside, through the window gap, and got on his broom. In short, It's something like that.

I leisurely flew about, enjoying the scenery of the country.

Something that could be called a change occurred after a little while.

"Nooooooooooooooooo!"

A scream from behind.

I held the broom with one hand and looked back as I held my hat down so it wouldn't fly away.

And then, "T-Too late" I thought.

"Aaaahhhhhhhh!"

Someone was flying towards me in a straight line while screaming and scattering the tears, but the moment I saw that, there was only one roof distance between us.

Avoid it? Impossible.

Although I instinctively bend my upper body, as expected, the clash was unavoidable. With unladylike screams like "Ugyaa" and "Uge", that person and I entangled and fell towards the rooftop. We peeled away some of the arranged roof tiles and, before long, we stopped just on the verge of falling from the roof. Looking down, one broken roof tile lay upon the ground. It's fortunate that there were no pedestrians there.

Because of the inadequate angle, I avoided the head-on collision, and thanks to this mysterious flying person who took the damage from collision with tiles, I haven't sustained injuries.

I stood up while brushing off the reddish brown fragments attached to my black robe.

"....."

"Ugogogogo....."

Leaking a strange groan with closed eyes was a teenage girl that seemed to be slightly younger than me. She had average features and evenly-cut, short black hair. She wore a white blouse and checkered skirt under the black mantle. Because she got caught up below me, they got splendidly torn apart.

Since there was nothing like a brooch attached on her chest, perhaps she is a mage.

"……Um, are you alright?"

As I touched the shoulder of the collapsed girl, she opened her eyes.

"……"

"……"

And, silence.

Even though I don't understand the circumstances, I said "A poor handling of a broom, eh?"

I think it's cynical. Yes.

"........Ah"

"It seems your head finally started working." I made a smiling face.

"Awawawawa." She once again closed her eyes. "W-w-w-w-what to do. What should I do? I can't fix so many roof tiles alone....."

Oh?

"Before that, shouldn't you apologize?"

"Ah, I-I'm Sorry! It was not on purpose! I swear!"

I can see that.

"By the way, you, are you alright? Given that you flew so splendidly."

"Ah, I'm alright! I look this lively after all!"

That.

She was saying that while red fluids spilled from her since she started

talking. She was looking with clear, unwavering eyes.

"Blood is coming out you know. Moreover, it's coming out from your head."

"This is just sweat!"

"There's a sweat with such Iron smell?"

"Errr, well, errr..... It's a sweat!"

"I got it already, so please come down a bit."

"Yes!"

"....."

Why did this happen? I'm dead tired after getting blown off all of a sudden.

After the scolding, there's a need to fix the roof tiles… oh I've had enough already. I would be a demon if I let a girl with such dangerous circumstances do it.

I took out a handkerchief from my pocket.

"Here, use this. Hold it down on the head."

"Eeh.....But."

"Also, while I repair the tiles here, please go and rest somewhere for a bit."

"No, I will also help out!"

"In such condition, rather than help, you'll be a hindrance. Please go and rest." I clearly declared it.

"But—"

"You. Are. A. Hindrance."

".....Okay."

After that, she sat at on the rooftop and held down the handkerchief on her head while feeling despondent like an abandoned cat. Although she was looking lively, it was unreasonable to let her do it, after all, as soon as she sat down, she lost her strength.

Let's put her aside for now. That degree of injury won't cause death.

Now, let's do something about this disastrous scene——I charged magical power in my hands. In a moment, along with the faint light, a long staff appeared in my hand.

This is a special privilege of magicians. Each of us —— Magicians, can take out various Magic Tools like a broom or staff with the use of ——Magic.

Putting magic power in my staff, I started to invoke Magic.

Time Reversal Magic.

As its name implies, it's a Magic to reverse the time flow, repairing the broken things with it and healing injuries, however, it's a Magic that requires a slightly high skill. But if it's the Witches of this country, then probably all of them can do it. But it might've been difficult for the collapsed Mage behind me.

After getting showered with Magic, the tiles started moving. The broken tiles started connecting one by one, and just like a pieces of puzzle, they returned to their original state.

Then the fragments disappeared, and the traces of breaking also completely disappeared from sight, and at that point, I stopped releasing

the magic and looked back. Next is the girl's turn.

"Well then, you are next."

"Umm, Err....."

After approaching the nervous girl who raised her body while holding her head, I started casting the Magic. Wrapped up in a tender light, her injuries along with her clothes started to heal up.

"Uwah....."

Amazing - I heard her mutter.

No, if one is a Witch, then it's normal to be able to do this much.

After confirming that she returned to her original appearance, I hurriedly went to pick up my broom that had fallen on the rooftop. I think it's a good plan to escape from here before it gets noisy.

"H-Hey!"

Partly ignoring her who was trying to say something else to me, I got on my broom.

"Thanks is enough. It's not good to disregard the surrounding when flying on the broom you know?"

"Please wait, I want to somehow apologize——"

"No need. Because, I'm in a hurry. Good bye. Mage-san whose name I don't know."

Then I flew away with broom.

Part 2

Speaking simply, a Mage is a person who can use Magic. Not everyone can use it, and in most cases, it is hereditary. My parents were also Mages.

Apprentice Witch ranks above the Mage and is one step below the Witch. Just like the name suggests, it's a title given only to women. For what reason is it like that? It's because, the ability to create magic is stronger in women than in men. Because of that, only women are placed above the rank of Mage.

There's just one way to become an Apprentice Witch: it's to pass the examination and receive a corsage that is a proof of Apprentice Witch. But this is not all. Having said that, there are many who give up in the middle of

the examination because of receiving deadly injuries.

After becoming an Apprentice Witch, there awaits a training for the sake of becoming a person worthy to be called a Witch; under the genuine Witches, putting in a great effort day after day until you get recognized. That can happen in a day, or it could happen after a decade. It all depends on personal effort and the consideration of the Witch-sama that becomes your teacher.

If you are recognized as an official Witch, you will get a star brooch with your name inscribed at the bottom and the title of a Witch gifted from the teacher. In my case, it's "Witch of Ashes."

To end the long explanation: in short - I am among the top ranking beings in this country. In other words, I am a Witch.

When flying in the skies, people would look with envious gazes, or in the restaurant they would say something like "Witch-sama! You have a discount on every cuisine of this store! Please choose whatever you like!" and things like that... at least that was the expectation.

"Eh? Discount? There's nothing like that. Perhaps you have no money? Ojou-chan?"

"……"

Well, It's that, huh? If they treat every Witch with special treatment, it

would turn out bad for the store.

Leaving the restaurant, I went towards the jewelry store. I wanted to sell the jewels that I gathered from the countries I previously visited. While thinking that I'd get a splendid price for them, I entered the merchant's store.

"Ah, these are complete imitations. I can't offer any price for them."

"That's absurd! Please look properly, once more!"

"It's the same no matter how much I look at it. What will you do? If you don't need it, should our store deal with it?"

".....For you to be saying something like that, you actually have ulterior motives to snatch it from me, isn't it?"

"Of course not, Ojou-chan. There's no way I would do that. So, what will you do?"

"Please return it."

I was very angry as I left the jewelry store.

But, well, even if that shopkeeper seemed a bit of a scoundrel, he didn't do anything to be despised by me right? That should be the case, right?

While feeling anxious, I went towards the inn. after all, It would get dark soon.

However.

"Aahn? This place is not for the brats like you. Now, scram."

.....Huuh?

Why?

Maybe this inn is for the rich adults only? Mhmm.

There's no choice. I'll choose another place.

And so, I descended with the broom towards the inn that had a cheap-looking worn-out signboard. This one should be all right I guess.

From the open window on the roof, I descended the ladder leading to the inside. But on the way down, I got carried away, and jumped. *thud,* a sound as if an iron ball was dropped reverberated. Of course, I'm not that heavy.

How rude.

The place down there turned out to be the reception.

The woman sitting at the counter, after seeing me——

"Welcome....."

Became stiff.

She, as well as me.

Evenly-cut black hair. Average features that were similar to a boy in some respects. Sitting there, was the girl that ran into me (Physical Meaning) a few hours ago.

"....."

"....."

The one who broke the frozen atmosphere between us first was her.

"Hi-Hiiiiiiiiiiiiiii-! I-I-I'm s-s-sorry! I'm sorry! Is this a revenge? It's revenge

isn't it! I'm sorry! Please spare me! Anything but my liiiiife!"

"No, um."

"Uwaaaaaah! I don't want to dieeeeeeeee!"

"Errrr....."

You don't have to be frightened that much.

"Please anything but my life....." - as she sobbed while rubbing her head on the counter, I gently touched her shoulders.

"Heeeeeeee-! You intend to start by tearing off my shoulderrrr! Nooooo-!"

"Please quiet down a bit." Ah, that came out wrong. "Umm, Are you alright? I just came here to stay for a day."

"Nooooo——oh, is that so. So that's what it was. Then, please fill out these forms~."

"....."

There are a lot of things I want to say, but I must endure. I don't want to cause more racket.

I accepted the blank forms from her and took the quill that was lying on the counter. There were simple things like number of people, amount of days and the name of the representative written on the entry form. Being a traveler, this form is already familiar to me.

As I glided the quill across the paper, she said with a very cheerful voice:

"I'm truly sorry for today. I started thinking in the middle of training and somehow ended up not managing to fly skillfully....."

"I see."

In short, she is clumsy with broom handling, eh?

"I wanted to properly thank you but you suddenly headed somewhere else——Ah, so your name is Elaina? I'm Saya." she said as she stared at my hand with a bright smile.

As I was writing, "Just thanks is enough. Besides, it's common to get someone caught up when practicing magic." I said.

Come to think of it, I once got scolded by parents when I was trying to light a candle and set the house on fire. Ahh, so nostalgic.

"But don't you want anything from me? It will be terrible if I don't do anything after getting you in such trouble and even making you heal my injuries.”

"It's nothing much though....."

"There must be something! Please! Elaina-san!"

I shook my head as she was trying to show her gratitude. It's quite an odd scene.

Well, there's nothing in particular that I want, but there's no need to refuse it unreasonably like that either. I thought a bit as I kept writing.

"Hmm.....Is that so, then—"

Can I get a lodging discount?

Is what I wanted to say, but I stopped.

An entry on the form caught my eye. Special discount for Witch-samas(Half per night) - was written there.

Hohou. Look what we have here.

"Ah, that, that's a reduction not covered by those who are Witch-samas. Other Magicians must circle the one on the general prices." She declared while knitting her brows.

"I see"

I circled the Witch-sama exclusive discount (half price).

"Eeh? Eh, umm....., uhh—?"

What's with that strange reaction? So rude.

"It's because I'm a Witch."

"But that's. You are joking..... Ah, no, I caused you trouble after all.....Yes! Then, you should get the discount!" She clapped her hands as she declared that. Because the conversation drifted to a delicate thing, or perhaps because I remembered this strange uncomfortable feeling, I shook my head.

"No no no no, that's not it. It's because I'm a Witch. That's why I have this attire."

"Eeeh—?" She uttered. Then pointed at my chest.

"But, there's no brooch of a Witch-sama."

"Eh?"

I dropped my gaze to my chest.

The brooch that was supposed to be there has vanished.

Part 3

The brooch of a Witch, so to speak, are their identification documents. Without it, I'm just an ordinary traveler who can use magic.

That's why I was treated like a child in the inn from a while ago. I see, I see.

More importantly, why didn't I notice it till now. Although the Witches are not rare, if I thought about it a bit more, I should've noticed faster. Am I an idiot? I'm an idiot right? I should just die.

As I cursed at myself, I immediately left and went to search for it….However.

"…….It's nowhere."

It wasn't seen anywhere.

I searched around where I clashed with Saya-san, but it was already dark outside, and the object in question was a tiny brooch that could fit in-hand. It wasn't something you could find by walking around for a bit.

"…….Uhh."

After moving in zig-zags on the rooftops while even checking the cracks, I descended towards the ground and started searching around the houses.

But, just like before, I couldn't find it. I want to cry.

"It's no good—! Elaina-san, it's not here either—!"

From above the rooftops, quite a loud voice came down and reverberated throughout the alley. Looking up, there was a figure of Saya-san illuminated by the moonlight.

Immediately after I noticed that the brooch was missing, she said "I'm the one responsible for it, let's go together!" and after insisting on it, we came to look for it together.

I somehow entrusted the side of the merchant's home to another person.

As I walked down, she was in charge of searching above. There was a possibility of me overlooking it.

However, it seems that the outcome was the same.

I floated up to the roof with broom.

"Not finding it after all this searching means that there is a potential that someone picked it up....."

I leaked a sigh without thinking.

"I think it might be because it's getting dark. Wouldn't it be better to search here once more tomorrow morning?"

As I dropped my shoulders, she called out to me with a cheerful voice. I'm a bit grateful.

"Let's do that....."

As I meekly nodded towards her, I decided to return back.

I'm flying on a broom. Floating unsteadily, like a magician with clumsy broom handling skills. Yeah, if someone was flying nearby, I might have crashed into them.

That brooch is something I obtained after a lot of trouble, and it also contained the memories of me and my teacher. The shock from losing it is unimaginable.

If it was the time when I became a Witch, I would've immediately noticed it after losing it.

But now, because I carried it for two years, it became a normal thing that I had on me.

".....Haah."

Anyhow, I feel down.

After that, I returned to the inn and ate a meal in a half-fainted condition, took the key from Saya-san and entered the room. However, remembering that I haven't taken a bath, I quickly went towards the large public bath.

Absentmindedly I immersed myself in hot water. Ahh, either way, I can't think of any other place where it could've dropped except where I crashed

into Saya-san... There's no other explanation... It's such a mystery… . . . thoughts like that passed through my head for nearly one hour. Remaining in the bath (Just me) until feeling dizzy, I dragged myself out the after almost melting in the water.

Then.

"Ah, hello—"

After returning to my room, there was a figure of Saya-san for some reason.

I closed the door.

Taking a step back, I confirmed the room number. Hmm, It definitely matches the number written on the key. Strange.

Maybe I imagined it?

I opened the door once more.

"Ah, Hello—"

It would've been good if it was a bad dream, but there actually was the

figure of Saya-san in my room. She was happily waving her hand from above the wooden bed.

"......Why are you in my room?" - I asked as I closed the door with my hands behind my back.

"I thought I'd talk to Elaina-san for a bit, so I was waiting."

"But it should've been locked."

"Fufu, I'm working at this inn you know?"

Saying that, she proudly showed off the ring with a bundle of keys on it.

Staying silent, I walked towards her,

"....."

And pinched her cheeks with both hands.

"I-ish hurts! Ish hurts!"

"Going in other's rooms as you please, what's the big idea. Ah?"

*Gurigurigurig

"Then, that means you successfully passed the Apprentice Witch examination, right?"

"That’s right."

I still remember the disappointment from easily passing it.

After Saya-san stared at me for some time, she suddenly lied down and folded her legs on the bed, and then touched the bottom of bed's headboard with both hands.

"Please! Somehow, please teach me the secrets of examination!"

"........Umm, What's with that posture?"

"This is a traditional prostration handed down in my hometown! It's a killer technique for apologizing towards others."

It's quite a strange culture..... Apologizing towards someone was that great in her hometown? However, the sincerity is clearly seen.

Somehow, I felt.....chills, or perhaps I should say, some kind of mysterious sensation. I held back the urge to trample on her saying "Aah? Is that the attitude you should have when requesting something from

someone, aah?" and kneeled down.

"Um, for now, please raise your head."

"Alright!" She suddenly raised her head.

"You don't have to do it that fast." I added. "But first, won't you explain your circumstances?"

Let's talk after that.

As she sat on the bed once more, I took a cheap-looking chair from the desk and sat at the opposite side. Saya-san's black hair jolted as she weakly shook her head, and–

"Err....." she shyly opened her mouth.

"I have a little sister. A very cute little sister, but…"

"Haa....."

That was a very strange way of introduction, but whatever, let's hear it.

"We are from the eastern country. Me and my little sister came from a far away to this country to become Apprentice Witches——Because there's no organization that performs examinations in our country. So as we worked at this inn to earn money, we have been living here for years to take the examination, however....."

"But both of you are still mages, right?"

At that, she cast down her eyes and slowly shook her head.

"Last time, only my little sister passed the examination. So only she returned back."

".....mhm."

I see, I see. Somehow, I feel I can see what happened.

In short:

"Since you were beaten to a punch by that cute little sister, you asked the Witch you just met for help. That's the case, right?"

"Well.....It's something like that." Saya-san muttered as she scratched her cheek embarrassed.

"When is the next exam?"

"It's in one week.....There's no time anymore....."

Well, the Apprentice Witch examination can be taken any number of times so I think there's no need to rush, but. . .

You want to meet your little sister that much, huh?

"....." After staying silent, I declared "If it's until I find my brooch, then it's fine."

In any case, I can't leave the country until I find my brooch, so I think it would be fine to do it in the meantime and I might even get to stay at the inn free of charge.

Part 4

To achieve the rank of Apprentice Witch, you need to pass the written examination first and then pass the magic examination.

The written examination, bluntly speaking, is the easiest thing if you fill your head with things like history and magic theories, but with the magic examination, that won't help with anything. If your skill is lacking, you have to

redo it many times.

Magic examination mainly looks at the ability to fly with brooms and operate Magic, and with each examination, only one person can pass. That will also be unchanged in the exam that's held in one week. Flying unstoppably with broom, at the same time obliterating opponents while receiving deadly attacks, and at the end, only the winner passes, becoming an Apprentice Witch.

The ugly part of the contest, is truly a cruel thing. It feels like it plainly displays the ugliest parts of humans.

I don't want to go through it a second time.

"Let's speak frankly. Saya-san. With your current power, the probability to win against other contestants in a proper fight is endlessly close to zero."

The next morning after I made a promise with her.

I spoke to her while sitting on the broom, "However, that doesn't mean that it's absolutely impossible to win against them. Please relax."

"W-What should we do!" Being lively despite the morning, she was looking with shining eyes. Like a sun that awoke just a little while ago.

I drew my broom towards her who was squatting on top of the roof tiles.

"For starters, you should learn to operate the broom at my, or even above my level."

"Eeh— That's a bit too hard....." She made a bitter face as she said it.

Just what is hard? What a spoiled child.

"There's no other method to survive the magic examination. Or rather, the current you will end up falling off the broom right after the examination begins. Better avoid that at least."

"Uggh....."

It feels like that.

For start, I decided to train her in the fundamental magic skills. In the end, just as I imagined, she's unskilled to the point that she can't even fly normally (To the point that you might hesitate calling her a magician), so it's very troublesome.

Ahh, so this is the feeling of mothers teaching their children how to fly, earnestly teaching from morning to evening as long as time allows it. As children point at us while making fun along with sneering adults, we are putting effort in this special training.

Of course, we didn't forget about searching for the brooch. She is slowly improving her results but on the contrary we aren't making any progress with the other thing.

My brooch, just where did it go? Seriously.

"Next is the rotation. Shift your body weight and bend skillfully."

"Yes!"

"Next is rapid braking and rapid takeoff. After forcefully stopping the broom with your entire your body, dash out with the feel as if you’re kicking the air."

"Yes!"

"Next is aerial separation. Let go of broom in the air and then summon it with Magic. If it gets dangerous then I’ll come to save you, so fly with a peace of mind."

"Yes!"

"Next is——" and so on.

Just like that, in the blink of an eye, Saya-san got to the point of using the broom close to my level. To be asked how many days it took to reach this point, the answer would be 2 days.

This terrific growth of Saya-san raised some questions. What in the world was she doing until now. Or is it simply because my way of teaching is splendid, I wonder?

When I asked, "Because I was self-training until now." She answered, while looking embarrassed. What the hell.

And now, the fourth day of staying in this country──Third day of teaching.

On the contrary to the usual unsuccessful search for the brooch (just information gathering), Saya-san's special training was refreshingly favorable.

It seemed she could still reach even higher.

"Next, let's memorize the offensive Magic──How about Wind Magic?"

"Wind Magic?"

To her who was standing on top of the roof that was burned reddish brown and quizzically bending her head, I swiftly nodded and said. "Yes, Wind. By manipulating the air currents, it can hinder the other participants."

This actually was a dirty technique on my Magic examination. I still remember the effects of manipulating the air currents, like the people who lost balance and fell down, and people who staggered and collided with buildings.

Wind manipulation is easy to handle, and can become a powerful weapon. Because of the time left, she must memorize it by all means.

"Then, please hit that bottle on the opposite side with the wind."

I pointed at the bottle that was put on rooftop opposite from us. From here, it's just a one house distance, so it shouldn't be hard at all.

"Imagine gathering the air and strike with it, and it will work out.—— something like this"

I swung the staff.

In a moment, the bottle grew hazy from the wind, and then its top shook with rattling sound.

It didn't fall right? Was it a failure? Saya-san turned around with the face

that seemed to ask that, but that was done on purpose. It really was, you know?

"Well then, go ahead and try it."

"......L-like this?"

With a *whoosh*, Saya-san swung the staff. Since Wind Magic itself is a Magic that is taught at the beginning, she was able to call it forth. But, the wind that she summoned passed by the bottle's top.

Regrettable.

"The way you hold the staff is wrong. And also the way of directing. Wind Magic is a very delicate thing, so swinging it too strongly will not do the trick."

"Err, then, how about this?"

Whoosh. The wind passed by.

It didn't change at all.

"Wrong. Like this."

I swung the staff and the bottle shook with a clatter. After noticing the reason I didn't throw the bottle down, "Wow!" - Saya-san leaked out a voice.

And, she once again grasped her tender staff.

"Ei!"

This time she completely imitated what I did, but it was too weak. Only a gentle breeze blew.

.....It didn't go smoothly.

"Wrong. Like this."

"Like this?"

It missed.

"That's completely wrong. Like this."

"H-how about this!"

The wind didn't even graze.

"Totally no good at all. It's like this, this."

"Is it something like this!"

Totally hopeless. Totally. No response at all.

Let's use the strong measures. Getting behind her back, I seized it with both hands. Saya-san's shoulders shook instantly, and I whispered close to her ear.

"Are you okay? Right now I will launch Magic through your staff. Please learn with your body."

"W-with my body?"

"Yes. With your body."

I nodded to her whose ears were bright red for some reason.

"Then, here I go——"

And.

That kind of thing. We continuously trained till dusk on our third day. Instead of saying that she mastered the Wind Magic, it ended up totally hopeless.

Rather, after I showed it to her from behind, it seemed like it got even worse.....?

Why did it happen? I don't Understand.

I can't always supervise Saya-san constantly. When noon arrives, I also go separately. For the sake of searching for my brooch, I fly downtown and listen to stories of various people.

Speaking honestly, it's nothing but information gathering after information gathering.

Without saying, I can't even find any simple information and in the end everyone shakes their heads while saying "I don't know".

The progress appeared on the fourth day from the day I became Saya-san's teacher. In other words, on the fifth day since I stayed in this country.

"I saw it." Saying cheerfully was the oba-sama that looked skillful with Magic. A star-shaped brooch was seen on her chest. But, from many years of service, it was splendidly worn-out.

Ooh, this is expected (Just what is?).

"W-Where did you see it!"

As I snapped at her, *Hihihi* - she laughed with a voice truly fitting to a Witch.

"Now, where did I see it....."

"Please tell me! Beautiful oba-sama."

"Hihihi!”

Without hesitation, oba-sama displayed her hand to me.

".....What's up with that hand."

"How much are you willing to pay? Hm?"

Currently Oba-sama was quietly presenting her hand to me. Pay to keep asking questions, is it?

.....So filthy. As one would expect from a Witch.

"……"

I quietly took a single gold coin from the purse and put it in Oba-sama's hand. And with that, oba-sama restarted like a wound up doll.

"The place I saw it——"

Oba-sama started talking. Vaguely, I myself also feel like I've known about it somehow.

The end of a loose tale was told easily like this.

Part 5

Nighttime between fifth and sixth day since I arrived.

From the bed, I looked out the window at the suspended moon, but suddenly, the door opened. As glanced there, the girl there timidly looked back at me.

She──Saya-san.

"Umm, Elaina-san"

"What is it?"

"I-is it alright to sleep together?"

I dropped my gaze at the bed.

"Isn't it small?"

"We are a cheap hotel so sorry about that."

Ah, no, I didn't mean that by it. This is a one person room. And only one person is supposed to sleep on this bed as well.

"Well, If you don't mind the narrow feel, then I don't really mind."

"Yay!"

Saya-san entered inside and roughly closed the door, then crawled in the

bed.

Sweet fragrance of someone who just got out of the bath drifted in the air. Although we used the same shampoo since this is an inn, it differed from my fragrance quite a bit. Holding her hair and bringing my nose close to it, different from my hair, it had the fragrance of a lovely maiden. Why is it that only she has such a nice fragrance?

Well, it's fine.

I'll also lie down.

I lied down, facing to the side of the moon and covered myself with a bed sheet. I immediately noticed the presence behind me.

"Isn't it bright to face towards the moon while sleeping?"

"Just a bit." I turned around.

And at that moment, our eyes met.

".....Wasn’t that a contradiction of what you just said?"

"It was not too bright to me."

She smiled faintly. Somehow that smile illuminated by the moonlight looked as if it would be broken from a touch.

"Good work for today. It's a great improvement compared to the beginning. To the point that you won't be needing my help anymore."

"Eeh, it's nothing like that. After all, there are many more things I want to be taught by Elaina-san."

".....I am a traveler. I will leave this country shortly."

"But we will be together all the time before then."

After some stirring under the futon, something cold touched my hands. It was Saya-san grasping my hand.

She looked straightly at me and started talking.

"Please teach me many more things."

"....."

The moonlight wavered inside her eyes.

An innocent girl like her was truly looking up to a person like me. However, I have to choose what is best for me from now on——even if it is something cruel for her.

This bitter feeling in my chest, is it from the guilt I wonder? Or is it because of the disappointment? I believe it's the former.

"This is an unreasonable discussion, Saya-san."

I declared.

Then, as I pushed her hands off mine, I said:

"Won't you return my brooch?"

Part 6

The disappearance of my brooch that seemed so complicated at a glance, in truth, was something really simple.

"Isn't the girl you collided with responsible for it? After you hurriedly flew away, she picked it up."

Oba-sama said as she was brightly glancing at the gold coin. That was something I also thought about. If I couldn't find it all from all these searching, then probably someone picked it up.

From the start I had an uncomfortable feeling.

Saya-san.

You were unskilled in operating the broom to the point that I wondered about whether you were flying poorly on purpose.

Given that the lowest requirement to enter this country was to be able to fly properly with broom.

At first I thought Saya-san might be a native of this country, but then I heard her story saying she was a magician who expressly came here from the eastern country... And with that, it would be even strange being unable to fly on broom. So——.

So, honestly. I...

I was suspicious about you from the very beginning. And, I kept waiting. For you to return the brooch to me.

"But while hiding it in your hands, you didn't hand it over to me. On the contrary, you ended up talking about your wish of always staying together."

This much is already a limit—thinking that, I started talking.

Sitting on the bed with her head hanged down, I wonder what kind of expression is she making? She didn't scream like she did at first when I touched her shoulders. Sorry, but, I'm not a kind person to that extent.

I just continued waiting for her. For the girl hanging her head to avoid the moonlight.

I wonder how long has passed since then? One minute? Ten minutes? It might even be just 10 seconds.

"......Why?"

Small voice, that was barely audible.

"What is it?"

"Why didn't you press me a question?" - This time, it was clearly heard.

"First reason is because I didn't have a positive proof. Even if I said "You are the culprit!", If you feigned ignorance, then it would've ended there."

"....."

"And also because I believed that you would return it to me at one point. To me, Saya-san didn't look like a bad person at all."

Just like a child spoiled by the mother.

In my eyes, she was reflected as an innocent cheerful girl.

"That's why, I was constantly waiting."

I told her.

With that, she finally lifted her face. Her pretty face was ruined from the wrinkles of tears. Saya-san wiped her eyes, and along with sobbing:

"I was lonely."

"I'm not your little sister."

"I know. I know that, but.....I-I wanted us to be together."

It was a voice that seemed like it would disappear anytime now. Was that

towards her sister? Or, was it towards me?

After meeting Saya-san by chance, what do I even know about her? It would be same as not knowing anything, but I somehow understood what kind of person she was.

A hopeless elder sister who was always spoiling her cute younger sister. Surely, that's who she was.

But she couldn't endure going with her little sister.

"Loneliness felt bad, bad, and frightening, that's why I——"

"Ei!"

I flicked her forehead. With *clink!*, a rough sound reverberated.

"That is not a reason."

Feeling bad from being alone, you rely on someone. From the unpleasantness of the ridiculing loneliness, she desperately searched for someone who would get along with her. Feeling scared from the solitude, she frantically ran from place to place.

Honestly, I think it's a very detestable behavior.

"So what if you are alone? And what if you feel lonely? If you are afraid of them, then you won't become a Witch Apprentice? Truly, no matter what you accomplish, a person will always be lonely. It's no good if you are not alone. If you start getting along with others, then that's the end."

I wonder if her little sister said the same to her when leaving. I won't know that truth.

"......But"

"Aaahhhhhh. I don't want to hear it. Your sorry excuse won't reach my ears!"

I covered my ears with both hands and started shaking me head. Making the shaking sounds. I swung my hair with a force that it hit her face.

Ah, I got a little irritated.

"Surely, fighting alone is painful. It's scary. I can understand that. That's why——"

Saying that, I took out a tricorne with Magic. It was really similar to the one I use.

I put it on her head.

"That's why, take this. In order to be alright, please take this part of me and carry it with you."

Saya-san tightly grasped the visor of the hat and:

"But, to take something that's Elaina-san's....."

"Ah, It's fine. That's a spare one."

I showed her another hat I took out with Magic. It was a hat really similar to mine.

"With this, we are the same. From now on, you will be alone. But won't be alone at the same time. Me and your little sister as well, we will always be watching over you."

That's why, return the brooch to me——I said in order to persuade her.

While covering her head with the hat, and holding it very, very tightly as her shoulders trembled, she quietly nodded.

That form looked so empty and frail.

I embraced her slim shoulders.

That day.

We spent our final night together. After she stopped crying and calmed down, I instructed her about ways to pass the Magic examination, then heard stories about her and her little sister's country, as well as telling my own tales from journeying, and other various things.

Ah, speaking of which, Saya-san seems to be a splendid magician. Well, I knew about it. But I wonder why is it that only at the time of using the Wind Magic, she started to get worse in it? No matter how much I asked about that, she just turned bright red and didn't answer. What the hell?

In the end, we fell asleep after the sun started rising. It was a long, long night.

But, it became a precious memory.

Part 7

I wonder how long has it been since I left the Country of Magicians.

Should be about six months.

After I met her, and after she returned the brooch, half-year has passed already it seems──Hah, the thing called time flow is a very fast thing. Really.

I already drifted so far that I'd say "Eh? Country of Magicians? Where's that?" if asked.

What reminded me of that person I met in that country, was her name that I saw when I casually entered a bookstore.

「List of people who recently passed the Apprentice Witch exam」

It was the bundle of cheap-looking papers that was a monthly newspaper of the mysterious organization called the Unified Magic Organization, which held the ceremonies of Apprentice Witch promotion exams worldwide. Its cover was decorated with the results of the promotional examination results, and with the comments of the successful participants.

And her name was also there.

"Hey! Look at you standing and browsing it." - The newspaper was confiscated by the shopkeeper-san that came out from the store.

".....Aah─"

I wanted to keep reading it.

"If you want to read it, then buy it."

"How much is it?"

"One copper coin."

I paid.

Then.

Taking the newspaper in hand, I came back to the inn while humming, then took the chair near the window and continued reading.

Written there was her everyday troubles and her aspiration towards the future.

About her coming to the Country of Magicians few years ago along with her sister. About her sister easily passing the Apprentice Witch exam and returning home. About the meeting with a certain traveler, receiving a beautiful hat and a courage to fight alone from her. About attempting the test several times after meeting that traveler but ending up failing. Yet, continuing with great effort without giving up, and finally becoming an Apprentice Witch. About planning to return to hometown from now on, and starting training in order to become a Witch.

I unintentionally loosened my face.

Her drawn-out story came to a finish with these few words.

"When I return to the hometown and become an adult, I will go to meet that traveler I love so much."

Dropping the newspaper on the desk, I looked up at the sky. Thoroughly clear light blue sky that kept continuing far across the distance without end.

I wonder if she's there, on the opposite side.

"I'll wait patiently as I continue my journey——Saya-san."

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Chapter 2

Chapter 2: She Who Is as Lovely as a Flower

Part 1

It was the middle of a season that won't be called neither spring nor summer.

Cutting through the cool and dry atmosphere, I was flying in the broadleaf forest. This forest seems to be quite vast, as I can't see the end no matter how much time passes.

In order to avoid the trees that block the path on the very narrow road, I shift my broom left and right while noisily rubbing against branches.

After that, I saw the sky. This forest was so full of trees that I just merely saw something dazzling at the opposite side of the greenery.

".....Oops."

While looking up, my tricorne was swept away by a tree's branch.

After stopping, turning back, and recovering it, I once again started my advance.

If it's so difficult to fly in this forest, it would've been better to fly above it——But unfortunately, it's too late now.

I already came this far, and turning back would take too much time. If I tried to forcefully fly up from here, then I have a feeling that this time, my tricorne won't be the only thing that ends up being damaged.

I feel like I've fallen into a somewhat difficult situation.

Whose fault is it you ask? Well, it's entirely my fault, so what?

While such complaints directed towards no one in particular drifted in my mind, I continued flying.

I don't know how long it was before the path finally opened up.

"Wow....."

I leaked my astonishment without thinking.

What I saw there was a garden of flowers.

I was flying above the garden.

There were red, blue and yellow flowers spread along the earth. All of them were vividly stretched out, facing the sun. The wind from the broom's movement was grazing my face and showering me with petals along with a refreshing fragrance.

Good fragrances that touched the bottom of my heart soared up along with the distinctly colorful flowers. Holding my hat not to be stolen by the wind, I lowered the speed of my broom.

There, in the middle of the forest, was another world.

I was completely captivated by that sight.

".....Oh."

Within the flowers—I saw the silhouette of a person mixed in within the dazzling colors.

Is this person caring for this flower garden? I pointed my broom towards them.

"Um, excuse me."

As I called out from above the broom, that person turned their head while sitting. It was a cute girl the seemed to be around my age.

"Ara, hello."

"Hello. Are you tending to this flower garden?"

She shook her head.

"No. I'm not the caretaker of this flower garden. I'm here simply because I love flowers."

"You are not a caretaker.....? Then, all these flowers bloomed here on their own?"

"Yes. That's how it is."

Is that so? I thought.

I thought something like a flower garden could only be made through human effort. Then again, the flowers were on earth before humans, so it's not like they won't exist without human interference.

But, how can such magnificent scenery exist by nature's power alone, without human assistance?

Amazing.

"Are you a Witch?"

Tilting her head, she asked as she gazed at my chest.

"Yes. I am traveling."

That's so amazing——Ah, that's right, in that case~ I have a favor to ask."

"If it's something in my power."

With that, she plucked some flowers, wrapped them with her jacket, and presented them to me.

It was a bouquet made on spot.

"If it's all right, I wanted you to deliver these flowers to the country that's up ahead from here."

"Is it fine to give it to anyone?"

I cocked my head in puzzlement as I accepted them.

"Anyone is fine. Handing them to people is considered a beautiful act and it's important."

In other words, she wants to spread the word about this flower garden.

I feel like I can understand her feelings to show this beautiful scenery to everyone.

"So in other words, you want me to be a publicist of this flower garden, eh?"

"You won't?"

"No, it's fine."

Rather, it would be my pleasure——As I replied, she looked relieved from the bottom of her heart, and answered "I'm glad." while showing a smile.

After that, we engaged in light conversation for a short while. About countries I visited up till now, and about flowers she liked the most. If I'm not mistaken, we talked about subjects like that.

Then, afterwards we spent a lot of time enjoying the moment:

"Well then, I have to hurry now——I'll deliver the flowers to someone in the next country."

"Please do, traveler-san."

She smiled and waved her hand.

"....."

Suddenly, I got an uneasy feeling. "You are not going to leave this place?"

"That's right. There's nothing bad in being in this flower garden. Soon, the day will end from just playing with flowers. I become happy just from basking in the sunlight. Isn't this just lovely?"

She said it with a clear voice. While continuing to sit.

Part 2

"Halt, little girl. Hey, I told you to stop, didn't I?"

After traveling for a few hours on my broom from that flower garden, I, who arrived at a certain country’s gate, was greeted by the black clothed guard-san with a nervous tone.

Taking such an oppressive attitude towards a stranger, and what's more calling me a little girl. While there were no people that made a good impression on me until now and this should be a natural thing for me, against him my anger raised if only just a bit.

But, I didn't show it. I'm an adult after all.

"Traveler you say?"

"Yes. Can't you see by looking?"

"What's that bouquet?"

"It's nothing important."

"....."

"What is it?"

"Show that to me for a bit."

He rudely approached me and snatched the bouquet from my hands.

"Ah, hey!" As expected, I can't close my eyes to this. I quickly got down from broom and tried to take back the bouquet.

But, he shook off my hands and stared at the bouquet—As if trying to drill a hole in it. As if my resistance was insignificant to him.

To make it worse, "This.....Could it possibly be that person's....." he ended up muttering something as his facial expression changed. I didn't get it.

.....This gate guard fellow.

"You, where did you get this."

"Why does it matter. Please return it."

"Per chance, isn't this picked up from the flower garden?"

"That's none of your business."

I am completely underestimated huh. What should I do? Should I turn him to ashes?——I took out my staff.

"Hey, what are you doing?"

It was at the moment I decided to throw him down with a gust and prepared my staff: a voice resounded from behind me. And it had another oppressive attitude.

Just what is this? Are there only arrogant fellows in this country? Haah? Getting angry, I turned around.

"That is a traveler-san's possession. Return it at once!"

There was a middle aged man——Clad in the same black cloth as the gate guard—— He wasn't glaring at me but at the young guard.

As I turned around, that young guard was grasping the bouquet with an awkward face. "But, sensei, This..... This is....."

"I get it from looking. I'll handle it from here so get back."

"That's not it, This is——"

"Get back I said. Didn't you hear it? You should rest for a bit."

".....Tch." While smacking his lips, he bitterly glared at me and went away.

"Ah, please return the bouquet."

"....."

He came back with a weak expression on his face, and:

".....Here."

He pushed the flowers at me.

"Thank you."

He didn't reply back. And now, he went off somewhere. That gate guard felt irritated until the very end.

Let's leave this behind now.

After watching until he disappeared, that person who was called a senpai made a troubled face.

"Sorry, Witch-san. It's because his little sister went missing recently. He's been like that ever since. Please forgive him."

"I don't mind it."

Even though that's a lie.

"By the way, those flowers, I'm sorry but can you dispose of them here? It is prohibited to take them in the country."

"Prohibited to bring it? You mean these flowers?"

I didn't understand the meaning and intention.

I unconsciously embraced the flowers tightly.

"There is a poison in those flowers." He indifferently said it instead of unreasonably snatching them away. "Since you are a Witch they are harmless to you, but they contain magic power that makes the hearts of people who can't use magic go mad——I also don't understand the details, but it's something like that."

"......Poison."

He nodded.

"Charmed by those flowers, people go to their original field and spend their whole life nourishing them. That's why taking them is prohibited."

"....."

"Is something wrong?"

".....No."

Supposing that there is a poison inside the flowers in my hands, then. . . could it be, I started thinking.

The girl that gave these flowers to me. Why didn't she try to stand up even once?——Why was she sitting in the flower garden? I kept wondering about it.

But, was that not trying to stand up, or being unable to stand up?

Maybe her lower body was not her's already?

.....

"Um, then the little sister of that guard from before."

"Yes. Ever since going to the garden of aforementioned flowers a few days ago, her whereabouts have been unknown."

He dropped down his gaze to the flower bouquet from before.

"Hey, Ojou-chan. Who are you planning to give them to? Perhaps—"

"No."

I interrupted his speech.

"I plucked these flowers for myself. The cloth they are wrapped in is my spare one."

That's why, I don't know about his little sister. I shamelessly declared.

Part 3

After that, without doing any notable sightseeing, I went to the hotel and rented a room for one night’s stay, then went took a bath and crawled in

bed as if trying to disappear.

I started thinking while staring at the thin wood boards lined up at the ceiling.

About the flower garden.

And about the girl that was sitting there.

In the novel "Adventures of Nike" that I read long ago, there was a mention about a strange plant.

As I remember, the circumstances in that tale were that a mutated plant obtained a sense of self, or ego, from absorbing the magic power that it originally discharged and started acting violently——It was something like that.

In the first place, something like magic power exists everywhere in the world. Plants like trees and grass in particular, after getting bathed in sunlight, they radiate magic power. But, I don't understand why in the world it's like that.

Then, those who take in that magic power that's not originally in the human body, and are able to manipulate it at will are called Magicians.

So, Magic can be used at its strongest inside a forest that is overflowing

with magic power. The place I trained at with my teacher in order to become a Witch was also in the forest.

I'd say we Magicians are also mutated existences like that plant in the "Adventures of Nike". After all, we are able to use something that is not usable by humans.

.....No, perhaps the ones who can't use Magic are the abnormal ones.

I don't understand who is who. I had such casual discussion in my head, but thinking about it is useless. That discussion is the same as what came first, the chicken or the egg, it's absolutely useless to think about after all.

".....Fuah."

I yawned and rubbed my eyes. I can't sleep yet. It's okay. Don't sleep, don't sleep.

——The flower garden from before.

I fear that from that much magic power, the flower garden will evolve in a strange way. Similar to the flower in that novel that obtained self awareness.

If I think about it, that forest where the flower garden was was so dense with trees that you could barely see the sunlight if you looked above from

there. The magic power that was created was befitting of it.

Under that much piled up magic power, it wouldn't be strange even if that flower garden turned into something different.

And the flower garden that spewed venom with its nectar that started tempting people——What in the world brought it forth?

"....."

What would become of people that were tempted by that flower garden?

That hazy feeling constantly clinged to my mind without leaving.

Part 4

"Oya, Witch-san, are you leaving already?"

The next morning.

The one protecting the gate was the middle aged guard from yesterday. Seeming to remember me, he greeted me with a casual smile.

While making the same smiling face:

"Yes. This wasn't a too big country so one day was enough for me."

"It's a boring country isn't it?"

"No no. It was very enjoyable."

"Hahah. That was a funny joke."

Was I seen through?

"By the way, where is the young guard from yesterday?"

"Hn? He's taking a rest today. He left the country yesterday evening and hasn't returned since then. Why? Did you wanted to meet him?"

"So funny."

I don't want to meet him, so listen.

"Well he said he'd return by tonight, so if you want to meet him, then you should wait."

"No thank you."

"Hmm. Then, are you still going?"

"Yes. I would say that there is no need to hurry, but unless you leave this morning, you might have trouble reaching the next country before sunset."

Besides, there is a place I must go.

More than this country, my mind is at that place.

"Is that so? Well, take care."

"Alright. Thank you."

Thus, I left the country.

Then.

I faced towards the forest visible in the distance—Towards the place from yesterday and flew with my broom.

As I approached the trees that were sprouting from the forest, everything got dyed by the green in front of me.

The violent wind was blowing and twisting around, cooling down the hot, vast land. The clouds gathered in the sky, interrupting the sunrays.

The now ashen sky began to dye the scene with a leaden color.

Immediately after that, it started raining.

Part 5

Passing through the trees that were pressed together, I was met again with the open space.

There was the flower garden.

Similar to the sky, they were quite dull compared to the vividness from yesterday.

"....."

Not just colors, even that appearance was giving off a slight uncomfortable feeling.

I followed the same path from yesterday in reverse, so this should not be another place, and, this uncomfortable feeling that can't be wiped of is a proof of it.

Descending with my broom, I met with the source of this uncomfortable feeling. Kusha! - With the sound that lacked elegance, the flowers underfoot felt like they were dead.

The flower garden with a pleasant fragrance. In front of it was a person's figure.

The true shape of this uncomfortable feeling was that: that human figure itself was what gave off this distress.

"....."

The girl who gave me the bouquet. And in front of that figure was a single man——His attire was different from yesterday but the person whose face I clearly remembered was sitting in the flower garden and looking at the girl with a smiling face.

It was the gate guard from yesterday.

"Hello."

"Ah, are you that traveler from yesterday? Greetings." He showed a very light reaction.

"Is this your little sister?"

He nodded to my question.

"Yes. I finally found her. Who'd think she would be at such a place."

Making a kind face, he grasped her hand.

It looks strange the more you look. For some reason, I can't perceive the girl whose hand he's grasping as a human.

Green specks are visible on the skin, and the ivy is crawling throughout her body. She stagnantly looked towards the sky with blank eyes without blinking. Her mouth was opened wide and drool was spilling out.

Her lower body was even stranger. Her body below the hips was wrapped in giant red petals.

As if a human was growing from a giant flower. As if the human and a flower were forcibly connected. It was very bizarre looking.

He was looking with fascinated eyes towards such girl.

"So lovely. To become so pretty at such place."

"....."

"What is it?"

I shook my head.

"No, you look surprisingly different from yesterday so I was surprised."

"Aah, from yesterday? My bad, yesterday I was perplexed from not knowing my little sister's whereabouts.

Looking slightly down, I saw ivy that was coiled around his leg. Surely, he is unable to move just like her.

Rather than unable to more, it might be more like he has no intention to move.

"....."

He wasn’t paying my presence any mind either. If I didn't call out to him, he would turn towards her and continue to talk to her with emotionless eyes.

"Good grief, to be monopolizing such a lovely place."

"Ah, that's right. Hey, let's invite everyone from the country here together. If we show it to everyone, they'll surely be pleased."

"What's more, I want to show you to everyone now what you became so lovely."

"Hey, is that okay?"

"I see. Thank you."

Perhaps he was able to hear words that I was unable to hear. To me it only looked like a one-sided conversation, talking to his little sister about something, however.

The girl that I talked with yesterday couldn't even make facial expressions anymore. Nor could she really express anything.

It looked like both emotions, body and everything else was casted away

somewhere by the flower garden.

She couldn't do anything other than be admired.

Just like a flower.

Part 6

I was flying upon my broom above the grasslands.

Fortunately, it hasn't rained ever since I got on broom. I want to reach the next country before it starts raining, but what should I do?

".....Ara."

Under the ashen sky, I saw something wriggle towards my direction.

As it approached, I vaguely understood that its shape belonged to a human. Without dropping my speed, I passed side by side with that person.

"....."

I didn't really understand whether it was a man or a woman. Age is also

unknown. I only understood that it was a human.

That person was walking towards somewhere. Going ahead, perhaps towards the country.

In those vague things, I only understood one thing clearly. There was just one thing I saw.

It was the important-looking thing that they were carrying in hands.

The flower bouquet.

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Chapter 3

Chapter 3: During the Journey: The Tale of a Brawny Man in Search of his Younger Sister

Part 1

There's a shortcut ahead of here.

There was a signboard indicating that put up so I meekly followed it. The road was narrow——Or better yet, it wasn't something that would be called a road, but something more like an animal trail where I couldn't even use the broom. It was impossible to fly, so I continued advancing while bending around forcefully.

It couldn't be helped so I continued walking as I pushed the grass aside on the trackless road that didn't have any pavement.

From the grass that was wet with morning dew, the droplets scattered as they came in contact with me. The hem of my clothes was already wet and started to get heavier.

This is a shortcut when walking on foot, but if I could use my broom, I could easily take a detour. Damn it.

Speaking of which.

What kind of country would the next one be?

Since it has such uncivilized road leading to it, I think it's probably not very popular with trading.

In short, It might be a country as uncivilized as this forest. No, that is just my guess to the end.

.....Hmm, somehow, I lost the mood to keep going all of a sudden.

Should I return back? Well, that was just a joke.

As such complaints flowed in my head like the wind, I kept walking for some time. After continuing into the forest with the unchanging scenery, finally a change appeared.

"......Oh my."

A tree has fallen down. A several hundred years old giant tree was fallen down on its side.

And, not just one, but countless of them.

Uhh. So troublesome.

But, it's not like I can't continue ahead. I climbed above the fallen tree.

I walked with both hands spread out as if walking on a rope, then I caught sight of something black crawling in the forest's shadow.

Eh, bear?

Part 2

Too bad. It was a human.

What's more, it was a giant with bulging muscles. So scary.

"Every tree in this forest was knocked down by my hands. What do you think, it's cool right?"

Humph - He took a pose to show off his muscles. Did he throw down the trees with just his muscles? I’m not interested in that, but anyway, enough about that.

"Are you perhaps from the country ahead?"

As he started posing for no reason, he said "That's right. I am native of that country. How did you know? Did you figure out from these muscles?"

"Eh? Don't tell me all guys in the country are brawny fellows like you?"

I took a step back.

"No. It's not like that. Rather, in that country, there's a muscle shortage."

"What are you trying to say by that?"

"Rather than that, these muscles, what do you think about them?"

I see, mutual understanding can't be reached.

I decided to go along with him.

"Ah—They are amazing muscles~. Can I touch them?"

"Go ahead, go ahead. Look!"

The giant man presented his bended arm to me.

I didn't know how it would feel so I poked it with a finger.

"Uwaa, amazing."

It was stiff like a rock.

"....."

"Um, why are you turning red?

"......I'm sorry. It's the first time a girl has touched me except my little sister....."

From that speech, it seems to okay to be touched by a little sister? Is that it? What's up with that shitty reasoning. Just perish.

Throwing aside my dark thoughts, I said.

"By the way, what are you doing in a place like this? Are you working?"

"No, I was in the middle of a training now."

Then, he started talking.

About his sister that was kidnapped by the strange people the other day. That because he was absent, he was unable to save her.

About hearing that his little sister's kidnappers were a brawny bunch according to the eye-witness. And in order to take down those brawny people, starting to train, in other words, chopping down the trees.

.....At the same time, working part-time as a lumberjack to earn the money.

".....In the end, isn't it just working?"

"What are you saying. I said it's not just for money. I have to accumulate much more muscles."

From that reputing with rough breezing, I got a slight uncomfortable feeling.

"What about the true objective of saving your little sister?"

"That's something I'll do someday. My muscles are not yet sufficient to take down my sister's brawny kidnappers."

No, you already transcended humans, so please go and save your little sister already.

.....If I said it, I think I would share the same fate as that fallen tree. Thinking so, I made an exaggerated nod.

Then he went on:

"But first, I need to defeat the bear——A boss of this forest. This is the first objective."

"Bear you say?....."

"Yes. That fellow is terrifying. And is able to catch fish barehanded in the river. I can't do that sort of thing."

"Haa....."

"Next would be a duel with that oddball at the backwoods of the forest that carries axe on shoulder. That weirdo can take down the bear that's boss of this forest in wrestling. It's a fearsome person."

"Haa....."

If it lost in wrestling, than that bear would no longer be the boss of this forest would it?

"Then after that—"

After that, I kept hearing about his plans for an hour, without even a word about his little sister. I wonder if he really plans to ever go save his little sister?

I wonder if his brain was polluted by muscles from overtraining himself? He seems to have forgotten about his real objective.

Rather, he put its priority far too low.

When will he remember about his true objective and go save his little sister I wonder?

Well, that story is something that has no relation to me.

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Chapter 4

Chapter 4: Fundraising

Part 1

"......Yea, this is quite bad."

It's a small country without any characteristics. The reason I sighed was not because of the stale townscape. It was because of the disastrous contents of my purse.

After paying three silver coins to enter the country, there was a lonely huddle of just three copper and one silver coins there.

Moreover, sadly, from the many years of lying there, you would have trouble distinguishing the silver from the copper coin. It was also unknown whether I could use it or not.

The value of a copper coin, in general, was that it could buy you one bread.

A silver coin could let you stay for a night in a cheap inn, but if it's the gold coin, you could get yourself a high-class one with decorations.

Speaking about my current possibilities, it would be to enter a cheap-looking inn with a noisy door, eat just bread, and sleep wrapped up in a thin sheet while enduring the hunger.

Simply put, I'll die soon.

"....What should I do."

I'm troubled over money but I have to spend it. I kept walking while holding my growling stomach.

From the lined up pastry stalls on the street, the fruit and vegetables were shining like jewels in order to tempt the starving me.

Aah, I want to eat.....

I want to eat——

"Excuse me, a bread please."

Without noticing, I ended up standing in front of the stall that had a rich aroma of wheat drifting around it. The prices were not written there.

A lively granny, sitting at the opposite side of the bread looked at me and

smiled.

"It's three coppers."

Whoops, that was impolite. I was mistaken.

It was a dirty old woman who was ripping money from the poor person.

"Eh? Excuse me. It seems I didn't hear well. Can you repeat it one more time please?"

"It's three coppers."

"I see, so three coppers for three breads right?"

"It's for one. Are you a half asleep or what?"

Are you yourself half asleep or what are you saying? Are you an idiot? How can you charge three copper coins for the crusty breads that seem to have been lying outside for a while.

Although I wanted to leave at least one complaint behind, unfortunately I didn't have enough energy to do so.

In the end, I left that place without saying anything completely exhausted.

Gulping air and saliva all together, I left the evil stall that tempted me behind.

As I advanced on the main street, I ended up on a plaza.

A giant fountain was stretching up to the sky. It was a totally ordinary sight that you can see anywhere. And on the bench at the side of the fountain, there was a couple merrily chattering not minding the surrounding stares, it was truly an ordinary scene.

.....

For some reason, I got irritated and thought about burning them to cinders, but casting the thought aside, I started walking towards the fountain.

Then, I drew the flowing water with both hands and started drinking. Cold water went down my throat and filled my body with the moisture it lacked.

"Hey look darling! That Witch is drinking the fountain water."

"It's true, such a shabby appearance! Hahahahaha!"

"....."

I loaded magic in my hand and silently swung the staff I took out.

A moment later.

Along with a plain sound, the bench got split in half.

"Kyaa! What happened to this bench?!”

"It probably got too jealous from our passionate love! Hahahahaha!"

"....."

Somehow my anger also completely vanished.

My feeling of hunger disappeared a little, so I put away my staff and started walking.

After all, I needed to find the inn to stay for tonight.

"Inn cost? It's thee silvers."

"For three nights? Sorry, but I plan to stay for one night only."

"No, it's three silvers for one night."

"....."

This place was already the sixth one. I was walking around in hope of finding a satisfying hotel, but why did this happen? No matter which inn it was, the price was three times that of a general market price.

In this crumbling inn that had a hole in a wall and no bath, the innkeeper asked three silvers for the night. You have to be kidding me.

I hanged my head down.

"Can't anything be done about it? I only have a silver and three coppers with me....."

I turned my purse inside out on top of the counter. A Lifeless sound reverberated.

"Aren't there just 4 coppers there?"

"Ah, that's a silver coin."

".....It's true. It's too unclean."

"Can't there be done anything?"

"There's no way" - The innkeeper uncle let out a sigh.

"Please understand, Ojou-chan. This is also a business."

"Is ripping the money from a poor person a business?"

"Business is usually such a thing."

"Fununununu....."

I can't deny it.

Somehow, it feels unreasonable to ask for the shelter in this inn.

I shifted my attention to the innkeeper while collecting the coins one by one.

"I have a question if you don't mind."

"What is it?"

"Aren't the prices in this country a little too high? The town scenery is also nothing extraordinary, and there doesn't seem to be things worth raising money for."

"Ah....."

“Since you are a traveler, you don't know, huh, Ojou-chan?” ── The innkeeper said those words.

Looks like there are circumstances after all.

The innkeeper seemed to be worrying about the surroundings, so I lowered my voice.

"The foolish king that was crowned recently, started fabricating large quantity of coins."

"Fabricating? You mean making fake coins circulate in the market?"

The innkeeper nodded.

"Yes. And with the appearance of the money in the market, the value of coins was dropped. For you who are a traveler, the prices seem to be a bit high, but for the people living here, they are valid prices."

"Valid you say..... But, you are using fake coins right? Wouldn't you receive punishment for using them?"

"The one who circulated the fake currency was the king himself. There's no way that we would receive punishments."

I see.

I think I saw the true colors of this country. I don't understand what the king's objective was, but if he circulated the fake currency to liven up the country, then that would be befitting for a moron.

But there are no one who would oppose the use of fake currency in the country, huh?

"To us, it's not really important whether the coins we use are genuine or fake. If the money inside the country increases, then it would be fine even if the prices are raised, and whether they are fake or not, the citizens won't have a problem with it. The only ones troubled will be you travelers."

"......That's right. I think people coming from outside will have their hearts broken from such high prices."

Just like me.

The Innkeeper glanced behind me.

Looking back, there was another customer standing behind my back and holding three silver coins in hands—— Seems like they plan to stop for the night here.

The prices that are three times higher than general, certainly do seem like they are valid prices for the people of this country.

"We should be done, Ojou-chan"

"Yes. Thank you very much for the important story."

I bowed and left the inn.

Part 3

I decided to work in order to earn income for the inn charges.

I returned back all the way to the street where I couldn't buy the bread. Then I sat on the side of the street for a bit. Looking at the people passing by, they seemed to be shopping with completely carefree faces.

Their shamelessness knew no bounds even though they were aware of the fake currency.

"....."

Since I'm a traveler, my funds will hit the bottom sooner or later. It was not work in order to settle down here, but an essential thing to do.

That being said, I've had problems with fundraising many time until now. If money runs out, I won't even be able to enter the country after all.

Usually, I would save a person from merchant's shams and earn few coins from it.

But, I started to think.

But, since for this country, it's fine whether it's real or fake coins, then there are no disadvantages.

When I think that I would receive the threefold amount as well, then just like the people of these country, I also won’t feel bad in the least about using fake coins.

"Hey, you."

I called out to the youth walking along the road with sullen face.

His shoulders flinched and he looked at me, "Eh, me?"

I nodded and beckoned him.

"You seem to have troubles right?"

"Umm, who are you?"

"Oh my, I was so rude. I forgot to introduce myself. I am a traveling fortuneteller."

As I shamelessly declared that, I pushed up my tricorne and looked at the sullen-faced youth.

He replied without erasing the dubious expression.

"Troubled you say..... Do I really appear so troubled?"

"Yes. To me, you seem to be full of troubles."

"Is that so....."

"That's right."

I made an exaggerated nod.

From personal experience, wavering in the middle of business leads to failure. The moment I wavered——The moment I opened up, they would start to hold suspicions towards me.

In short, the number one rule is to make an impression.

I began:

"You yourself can't fully understand what you are troubled over. ——For example, it could be because you don't have confidence in your looks, or maybe something didn't go smoothly at work, or perhaps you feel anxious after being unable to meet your destined person no matter how much time passes——"

"........!"

His face twitched just for an instant, but I didn't miss that.

I see, so he is worried about not having a lover, huh? I see.

"You are feeling anxious about not having a lover——Am I wrong?"

"......Well. Probably."

He said that to me while averting his eyes.

"I shall offer you a divination——About the day your destined person would appear before your eyes."

I took out my staff and loaded magic power into it.

Poh - With a sweet sound, fire was produced.

"......Aah"

And immediately after being born, it was swept away by the wind and faded.

It seems the magic power was too weak.

Regretfully, I raised the staff that had smoke coming out even above. Truthfully speaking, I wanted to have a development where I tell fortune while looking at the flames, but that's already impossible.

After blowing off all steam from it with my breath, I put the staff away.

"I see, I understand."

"Eh? With just that?"

"Yes. The smoke divination just now was a method of divination where you look at the shape of the smoke and predict the fortune."

That's a lie though.

"I never heard of it."

"Even so, it's like that. After all, this fortune telling is a secret art that has been passed down in my family for generations. It's not possible for others to be aware of it."

I forcefully ended the talk in order to not let the lie be found, "By the way, about your destined person."

"Y-yes. What? When will I meet her?"

"Today it seems."

"Eh, Today? In other words, that means you are——"

"Tonight, your destined person will appear right before your eyes."

I feel like he was trying to say something ambiguous, but it's better to disregard it as nothing but nonsense.

Before he ended up saying another verbal slip, I opened my mouth.

"There should be a plaza with a fountain up ahead right? There should be a broken bench on it's side."

I took out something from the purse and started talking as I presented it to him.

"If you put this on your hand and stand near the bench, your destined person will show up before you without fail."

After he took it from my hands, he got puzzled.

"......This is? All I see is just a normal string."

"That is nothing like a normal string. That's a magical string that is loaded with my magic power. It holds the power to draw in the destiny."

Of course, I didn't do something like loading my magic in that string, and in the first place, even if I did, it wouldn't have power to pull in destiny.

Speaking of which, if I'm not mistaken, this is the string that I picked up near the stalls.

"If I have this string..... Then, the destined person...."

"That's right. You will surely meet her. Well then, it would be sufficient if you wait till night with a neat appearance. So that way you don't disappoint the destined person."

Somehow, the youth who was hesitating started to tightly grasp the string before long.

"I understand. I will wait near the bench while wearing this."

He tried to depart with a refreshed smile. But, I hurriedly stopped him.

"Customer, the combined price of the string and fortune is one gold coin."

I began saying magical words to the frowning youth. "Don't worry. If by chance you can't encounter the destined person, I will return all of it."

It was about one hour after the sullen faced youth left.

One woman passed in front of my eyes.

She was a plain woman with plain appearance and features. Her age was approximately same as mine. Her base features weren't bad, but her good points seemed to be killed by her unkempt hair and her attire looking as though it were just thrown together from her closet.

Just like that darkened silver coin.

Anyhow, I decided for that girl to be my next customer.

"Hey, you..... You are worried for being unable to find a lover right?"

I called out to her who was walking with her head down.

Her shoulders flinched and she turned towards me.

"......M-Me?"

"Yes. You."

"Umm, who are you?"

"Oh my, I was so rude. I forgot to introduce myself. I am a traveling fortuneteller."

As I shamelessly declared that, I pushed up my tricorne and looked at the her.

While shivering just like a herbivore under the gaze of a predator, she asked me timidly.

"H-how did you know?"

"I understood it. I am a fortuneteller after all—I saw everything about you starting from your troubles to your destined person."

"E-even the destined person? Is that truee!"

"Yes. I saw it clearly with these eyes."

Obviously, it was a lie.

"Then, when will my destined person appear?"

"It seems today."

"To-today.....?"

She who throbbed from the word "destined person" was also greatly shocked from such a sudden development. But I didn't panic. Because up to this point, everything was going according to my plans.

"There should be a plaza with a fountain up ahead right? There should be a broken bench on it's side."

Then, with extremely calm tone, I added.

"Tonight, a person wearing a string on his arm should appear there. He would be your destined person."

Part 4

And so. Just like that.

While saying "For the improvement of fortune", I gave them a stone that I picked up nearby and arranged the fated meetings.

And the result of continuing such superb business for a few days: my purse is now crammed with lots of gold coins. If it's this much, then I can live next few month with enjoyment.

Oh no-no, I have to thank the king who fabricated the coins first.

Thanks to the fact that the prices in this country are high, the consumption of money just for staying is high, however in return, there are unusually high rewards in business so everyone is happily doing it.

In any case, money’s value in this country is lower than other countries.

"—Yes, so, in other words, if you decorate your store with this『Half Price』signboard that's loaded with my magic power, the bread will start selling like hot cakes."

"Really? I'll do it without delay!"

"Is that so? Ah, the signboard cost and consultation fee is 3 gold coins."

"Is that for 3 signboards?"

"It's for one of them. Are you sleep talking or something?"

Coins in my purse have increased yet again.

I forced a signboard onto the old lady from the bakery who came after hearing the rumors, and with that, my work for today is done.

Joyous clinking sounds were heard from the purse that became completely full.

Well then, time to return to that worn-out inn. I stood up and lightly stretched, then started collecting the luggage.

"Wait, you."

It happened suddenly.

Someone grabbed my shoulder from behind—I got surprised and turned my head around.

There was a soldier standing there.

No, it seems soldiers.

About ten soldiers of similar appearance slowly spread out and enclosed me. They had spears in hand and guns on their backs. It was a little out of place situation.

"You are a traveling fortuneteller right?"

Man who stood before my eyes opened his mouth.

"No, you are mistaking me for someone."

"No use lying. We were watching your trades with customers from behind the scenes."

"....."

Sweat started to pour down my cheeks.

This is bad. This is bad, this is bad, this is really bad.

What should I do. Looks like someone complained about my scamming work——But, still, I haven't really cheated or anything. But, ahh, what to

do..... I'm surrounded so I can't escape. I could probably escape if I use Magic, but want to avoid making enemy of the whole country....

"Please come with us," the man in front of me declared it indifferently, "The king wishes to meet with you."

It goes without saying that I didn't believe my ears.

After I walked through the street of no real character surrounded by knights, I arrived at the palace without any special features.

Aside from the high prices, there wasn't anything peculiar in this country.

In the biggest room of the royal palace, a single young man was sitting on a tall chair of the throne.

The young king sitting above the stairs looked down on me and uttered:

"Are you the traveling fortuneteller? You look very young."

"King-sama is also very young. I was thinking king-sama would be older."

The soldiers sent cold glares at my words. No, I didn't say that with

sarcasm at all. It's true.

King glanced at the soldiers and said, "That's enough, of all of you. Withdraw," and sent them off with hand motion.

After soldiers left the vast room and only two of us remained in it, the king started once again.

"There's a rumor that your predictions are very accurate, is that true?"

"Yes, well—Those who said that it's accurate are probably right"

"Are they effective only towards humans?"

"? What do you mean?"

"I want to hear whether it's effective on things in general."

He declared that in a completely calm tone—I don't understand what he's thinking at all. Does he believe in my abilities? Or is he suspicious of them? Or is it that he already saw through my lie?

I approached in a roundabout way.

"What object's future do you wish to see?"

"The future of this country" - the king immediately replied.

"Future of the country..... is it?"

That's right - he nodded with a humble expression, at that point I began to think.

Predicting the future of this country doesn't require something like fortunetelling. It's a simple thing.

No, in the first place, I don't have any powers for fortunetelling.

"Before I answer that question, there's one thing that I wish to ask you, king-sama."

"? What is it?"

I started by saying, "Please tell me the reason of spreading fake coins in this country."

After hearing that, he frowned and leaked a sigh "That's nonsense."

"Eh, are they genuine coins?"

I looked at the coins that were filling my purse.

If all of these are real ones, then I'm an absurdly rich person now. Yaay.

".....Indeed. What I spread were genuine, real coins——No, I'm not the one who spread them though."

"Was it by someone's instructions?"

Young King nodded.

"It was done by the right-hand man of the previous king. I have been crowned just recently, so I left all economic policies to him. It was the idea of that person to spread the newly made coins inside the country to stimulate the economy. Well, in the end it didn't go as planned."

"....."

I have a feeling that it going smoothly is out of the question though.....

"Because the money inside the country increased all at once, the talks about fake currency fabrication started spreading, but that's complete

nonsense."

"......Isn't there a possibility that that adviser has lied to you?"

"There isn't. I secretly summoned a specialist in palace without him noticing and made him investigate, but all newly produced coins were genuine without a doubt."

That's why, the rumors saying I spread the fake coins within the country are nonsense——The king stood up as he said that.

He slowly came down from stairs and approached me.

"That adviser truly did well. Truthfully, I even think that he should have become a king instead of me. ——However, that didn't come true because of the hereditary system. Before advancing the political measures, he would always come to my side with advices. If not for him, I would have been thrown down from the King's seat long ago."

"....."

He stood before me and made an unpleasant face.

"But, I just don't understand him lately——I don't think that the things he made me do are connected to prospering the future. I don't want to doubt him, but looking at the present situation, the economic state of this country

is too grave. Although the rumors about fake coins appearing in the market aren't true, the travelers are growing distant because the prices are high. The diplomacy is also lost."

Hearing his troubles, there's only one thing that came to my mind.

This young king wants to have a peace of mind.

By looking at the future of the country, he wants to obtain a peace of mind. If the future of the country is peaceful. If the adviser didn't lie after all.

What an honest person——No, describing him by simple honesty might not be correct.

"That's why, I want you to show me the future of this country. Can you do it?" he declared.

My answer was already decided.

"It is possible."

He nodded with gleaming eyes, "Is that true!?"

After he forcefully grasped my hand, I withdrew my hand while stepping

back and said.

"Yes. I do not say lies."

Telling lies like breathing is surely said about this.

"But before telling the future of the country, I have a condition."

"What is it."

I raised the index finger.

"First. Please let me stay here for a day. Telling the fortune of the country is very hard work. First, it's necessary to grasp the whole country from the royal palace that is located at its center."

"Yes. I understand. I will immediately make arrangements."

The young king made a big nod. I raised a middle finger next to the index.

Staying one night is just an additional thing. For the thing I will do after this doesn't require preparations for it to go smoothly even though I said so.

What is important is the next condition.

"And the second――"

Part 5

After that, while thinking about my strategy, I've been lying on the bed for a while in the room King-sama gave me. Waiting for the time when I need to carry out my plan.

When the sun had finally sunk below the window and the outside was dyed by darkness, I finally opened my eyes.

It's about time it seems.

I took out my staff and hit my head with it's tip.

"Eii!"

With silly pop sound, I turned into a single small mouse.

I temporarily changed my form by applying Magic on myself. It's a tiresome thing and I didn't want to do it, but there's no other choice.

Taking a form that's easy to move in, I recalled the blueprint of the royal palace that young king showed me and dashed towards the desired location.

If I go through the corridor, I might end up slaughtered by passersby, so I decided to move by attic. I advanced briskly on the attic that was so dusty that it it couldn't be compared to the dazzling interior of the castle.

And, I arrived just above the room of the adviser.

As I looked down from the gap, I saw an adviser with his elbows on put on the writing desk. Opposite of him stood a single soldier. He had an appearance similar to the soldier that surrounded me today.

I guessed from the atmosphere that they weren't having a friendly chat.

"So, how is it father?" - Said the young man.

"How you ask?" The adviser replied while scratching his head, "It's certainly going favorably. Soon that king will fall."

"Soon you say, and when is that? Isn't that what you've been saying for a while?"

The young man raised an agitated voice.

That last voice seemed to be asking about something——But thinking about it with this small head, only one person that sounds like that comes to my mind.

Perhaps, the young man who is having a conversation with the adviser is that soldier from daytime who grasped my shoulder. It might be my misunderstanding, but.

"That king has summoned the traveling fortuneteller to the castle. Surely, it's for predicting the future of the country. Our plan might be revealed to the king."

The advisor laughed.

"There's no way that the youngster who adores me would do something like that right? Most likely, he wants to hear about his fortune in the near future."

"....."

"What's more, the fortunes told by that traveler are also suspicious. She might be a little scoundrel that makes money by tricking people."

Kuuh!

"......The fortuneteller is just a little girl."

"I want to see the person myself."

That's right. Everything is exactly like that. But I'm not a little girl. I'm a Witch you know? A Witch.

Perhaps he was tired to return the words, the young man just sighed and replied, "Keep the promise."

"Yeah, I will keep it. That's why you should also do your job properly. After all, your actions are essential in my plan."

"......I understand."

Saying that, the young man decided to leave the room.

The ceiling broke with loud tearing sounds, and the ashen-haired Witch holding the staff jumped down from there.

Who in the world was that? That's right, it was me.

"......Haa, haa, fuuh......."

Aah, what an awkward appearance.

The Magic wore off midway. This situation was familiar.

It seems that the ceiling where I was peeking from was too narrow for my body to fit. It broke the moment I returned to my original form.

Or maybe it was rotten from the long age?

At any rate, it wasn't because I was heavy. .....Probably.

"W-Who are you!"

While I was standing up and brushing off the dust stuck to my body, the adviser was alert with a rifle in hand. He was probably hiding it under the desk.

Thoroughly prepared.

"Nice to meet you."

I swung my staff.

In a moment, a flowers bloomed from the gun.

They were quite lovely flowers at that.

"You——! T-This!"

Because the flowers I made turned out to be so pretty, I completely forgot about the other person behind me.

But since turning around was troublesome——I tapped the floor with the staff and bestowed life to the scattered wood fragments.

The fragments turned into ivies.

And the ivies dashed towards them.

And it seized them both.

"You are the adviser of the king-sama right?"

The middle aged man whose limbs were restrained by the ivy looked at me. He directed eyes full of hatred and bewilderment towards me.

"Who are you!"

"Father, this is the traveling fortuneteller!" the young man replied from behind.

I frankly nodded, "That's how it is. I am the traveling fortuneteller."

adviser wriggled like a bagworm while unable to move.

"......What business do you have with me."

"Oh, you should know that yourself right?"

"....."

Silence.

I turned around. The man who brought me here at daytime was glaring at me.

"What do you intend to do!"

I answered.

"I intend to predict a peaceful future for this country."

Part 6

After that, those two were seized by the guards that came after hearing the noise, and were made to spill everything in front of the king.

It seems that the father and son planned to seize the country.

And the coins that were spread inside the country turned out to be fake in the end. It seems that the expert who told the king that the coins were genuine was a dirty imposter who was bribed by that adviser.

In order to distort the hereditary system, he purposely made the country fall into crisis. He confessed that he put all the blame on the young king and planned to overthrow him. Probably after the advisor-san became a king, he planned to make his son succeed him.

But, it ended with a failure.

Right now, they are locked in prison, but I don't know what would happen to them from now on. It's not a question I should be concerned about.

Then after their questioning has ended, I was summoned to the throne and received the promised thing.

"Thank you very much"

I nodded as I confirmed the contents. Large quantity of old gold coins went inside my purse.

As a second condition for predicting the country's future, all earned gold coins were exchanged for the old ones. Fake ones were completely removed.

"Collect all fake coins that appeared within the country" The king weakly ordered. "The coins inside your purse are most likely fake too."

"As I thought."

The promise to predict the country's future was still not fulfilled. The problem that the young king was worried about already disappeared, therefore there was no need to predict it anymore. I feel relieved that I stopped telling lies.

Although the future of the country was weighing on my mind a little, I'm a traveler so I have to depart from here at once.

What kind of road would this country follow from now on? That question is not something that someone could answer or predict its future. The same goes for me.

"But, it's regretful. To think that he kept lying to me."

I replied to the lamenting young king, "A liar is someone who looks composed all the time."

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Chapter 5

Chapter 5: During the Journey: The Tale of Two Men with an Undecided Match

Part 1

As I flew above the gentle grasslands with my broom, the sounds of wind gently brushing the flowers reached my ears. The moderately warm sunlight and fresh wind was a pleasant combination, so much that I wanted to keep on flying at this place.

Whoosh, whoosh, the sound of the wind could be heard as I manipulated the broom, following the wind left and right - I started enjoying it just a bit.

But enjoying moments always end up being easily disrupted. This time was also not an exception, and I stopped after catching some voices in the wind.

"Aahn? What was that? Say that one more time you shitty big brother."

"Aahn? As I said, I was the one who was better you shitty younger brother."

This precious refreshing mood was ruined.

As I turned my head to confirm the source of the voices, I saw shapes of two men who were arguing about something.

The two wore colorful closes, and guessing from their previous conversation, they are brothers.

"Wrong, I'm(orecchi) better that you. I'm absolutely better."

"Wrong, It's decided that I'm(oresama) better. Because there doesn't exist a little brother who can surpass his older brother."

"Hahaa! That logic is too old. It's the antique way of thinking. Over the ages, there have appeared little brothers who grew as they witnessed the blunders of their older brothers. Little brothers who can avoid blunders in advance are the strongest."

"Hahaa! Such foolish talk. Isn't that the talk about good for nothing old brothers? But I'm already a perfectly flawless human. If I had failures, just for argument's sake, those failures would be something too high for you to succeed with!"

Those two cursed for some reason and kept glaring while groaning like "Aah?" and "Wanna have a go?" towards each other.

By the way, what exactly is the antique way of thinking I wonder? Or what are the high level failures?

While I was puzzled about that, my eyes meet with one of the brothers (who was probably older one) who referred to himself as oresama.

He immediately declared with a loud voice.

"In that case, we should let that girl judge which one of us is the superior!"

The brother (probably younger) who referred to himself as orecchi nodded in agreement. "That's fine with me. Well, the one who wins would be me in the end anyway."

I have a very bad premonition about this.

"So, what are you two quarreling about anyway?"

I asked the two while sitting on the grasslands.

The two of them had similar facial features and hairstyles. Only difference between them was the color of the clothes. Older brother wore red while younger brother wore blue.

And then red and blue brothers said at the same time.

"Magic tricks!"

"Haa, magic tricks is it?"

"Magic tricks!"

"I got it already so no need to say it for the second time"

"Mag—"

"Hey didn't you hear what she said? This is why brats are...."

"Aahn? Don't get carried away just because you were born mere three years before me, you shitty brother."

"Exactly because you don't know the difference between three years is what makes you a brat, you brat."

"Even though there is three year difference, you can't even use magic tricks on the same level as me? Ah?"

"Won't the two of you quiet down for a bit?"

"Yes"

"Okay"

I made them shut up. They became silent. Good, it finally became quiet.

However, magic tricks huh..... Since I am a Witch, I'm too unfamiliar with magic tricks.

This is troublesome. Umumu.....

Talking to both of them at once would be troublesome so I'll talk to one at a time. I started talking towards the younger brother.

"Why magic tricks?"

"In your country, there's not even one magician. There's also the fact that it's a small country, but, for some religious reasons, it has a history of banning Magic."

"Mhmm"

I have a feeling that some serious talk is about to start.

The older brother continued the words of his younger brother. "But there's an instinct that attracts ones to prohibited things right? There are many young people like us who admire magicians."

"So the two of us started thinking.『Eh? If we pretend to be magicians, wouldn't we make a sum?』so we thought."

"After that, we performed as the ‘Illusionists who are really close to the Magicians’ on the way."

Ah, it really was a serious story, huh?

I cut into the story that those two were proudly talking about together.

"And, didn't anyone get angry?"

The one who answered was the one in blue ─ In other words, the younger brother.

"They got angry, and we got caught. But, it's not like we can use Magic. They are magic tricks. So, no matter how many times we were caught, we were immediately released."

"Such thing....."

That's like a treatment of a hero.

Also, they added "The government of our country is no good! They are incompetent!" at the end.....

"But, wouldn't the magic tricks end up being banned because of you two?"

It just a simple question.

"Ah. It was."

"And, we were exiled. Completely broke."

"Eh? You were exiled huh?"

They both nodded. They really act the same.

"The decision to exile us was decided one month ago."

"After that, in order to earn money, we ended up becoming traveling entertainers."

"I see, I see."

"However, before becoming the traveling entertainers, one problem popped up."

"Our team didn't have a name"

"Team name is it?"

"We decided to make the team name from our names, but you see, we started arguing about which one of our names should be first"

"Then, we decided that whoever was better at magic tricks would be the first one"

I see, so that's what it's about.

"By the way, what was the outcome?"

Onii-san was the one who answered.

"Currently it's 0 wins, 0 loses and 15 draws."

"The outcome isn't decided at all....."

"That's why we want you to decide the victor among us."

"I want for my draw to end today"

Two of them glared at each other while shouting things like "What you looking at?" and "Haah?"

Oh? Could it be that I have a serious responsibility?

Part 2

The magic tricks of those two was truly a wonderful performance.

They did things like taking a bird out of nowhere, teleporting coins, finding the card I drew and so on. I got surprised and excited over and over.

Magic tricks are amazing.

But what was troublesome, was that the skills of those two were so great that they couldn't be distinguished. Certainly, I understand why the victor couldn't be decided from this contest.

"How was it? I was great right?" - said younger brother while putting on airs.

"No, my magic tricks were way better right? It's like that without a doubt" - Big brother also said exaggeratedly.

I looked at the two who kept glaring at each other at the same time, and declared.

"It seems it's a draw~"

Just that.

Both of their skills are amazing so there's no way for me to tell who's better —— That's my stand on this.

Honestly, it would be just too troublesome to speak my mind.

I will let some other person conclude it.

I was ready in case they started raging from my answer, but as one would expect, because they already had 15 draws, they were unexpectedly calm.

"......Is that so. Well, It can't be helped. Deciding the team name is still ahead."

"Weeell, my name would be the one that ends up as first anyway"

"What what that?"

"What!"

"Please stop it both of you"

"Okay"

"Alright"

While they became silent, I took some distance.

"Well then. My role ends with this."

I am a traveler after all, so I need to reach the next country soon—— saying so, I made a forced smile and began to depart.

But at that moment.

"Ah, hey. Wait a minute."

"Won't you pay the price?"

I was stopped by them.

Eh? Price?

"The magic tricks we just did has a price right?"

As I turned around, both of them started shrugging.

"It's should be quite pricey, right?"

"Seeing our tricks for free isn't really a good thing right? Right?"

"Right?"

Where did the two who were quarreling since a while ago go? Now they appeared to be quite in sync with each other.

I have some bad feeling.

"Wait, no one said anything about it costing money....."

"I don't remember saying it was free either," the younger brother started acting like a child.

"Wait a second. Let's confirm the situation. You asked me to watch over your contest of magic tricks—— Then I acted as a judge of that contest. Is this correct so far?"

"Yes. That's how it was."

Older brother nodded. Then, I continued.

"Right? Isn't that right? In that case, these magic tricks weren't for the business but for the sake of deciding your match right? Should there be a necessary for paying the money?"

"Don't say foolish things. Our magic tricks are always our matches. Right?"

"Right?"

.....These two.

They set me up. I had a feeling that I was being tricked since the beginning.

They lure travelers with their quarrels, then make them see their tricks and ask for money..... Probably, they repeated this kind of play for the past 15 times as well.

What shameless bunch.

"......By the way, how much is the price?"

I'm just making sure. There's no way I'd agree to their complaints.

"It's four silvers"

"It's 8 silvers all together"

"Ehh. So high"

One silver coin is needed to stay one night in the inn, so in other words, they are asking me to give up eight days worth money to them.

Such a thing.

"You saw the magic tricks of best traveling entertainers after all. Rather, that should be cheap right?" big brother declared.

Well, the skill of their magic tricks were most certainly high, however.

"....."

I'm just unwilling, but certainly, their complaints aren't really wrong.

I who didn't agree would be in the wrong, but that's it.

.....

I don't wanna pay. I don't wanna pay the money for such useless thing——

Etc..

I kept thinking about such things over and over.

"Wait a second!"

I heard some voice, that sounded like it was asking about something.

As I looked ahead, there was a giant from a while ago standing there like a saviour.

Ohh, what a coincidence.

"Ah, hello"

Nodding hastily, he began to get embarrassed.

"It's been a while, Witch ojou-san"

"It's been a while. Brawny man."

It was the guy with cool muscles that I met few days ago. The brawny man.

Since I never heard his name when I met him last time, I reflexively called him a brawny man, but it looked like he started throbbing when he heard word about muscles:

"Fufun, that's right. I am the brawny man"

He puffed his chest.

Uwaa, he looks like a fool.

With the sudden appearance of this mysterious brawny guy, those two swindlers were clearly trembling in fright.

"H-Hey..... Who is this guy"

"What? Could it be her boyfriend?"

"That's wrong"

I firmly declared.

A guy whose muscles reached up to his brain is a bit much.

He, without understanding the meaning behind my behavior——Or perhaps not even hearing it——turned toward the two and said with quite a bit of volume.

"By the way, you two! Doing things like tricking people to earn money, even if God allows it, I for sure won't. Prepare yourselves."

It became something that was too much for me in every sense of the

word so I turned my face away.

"......Why did you turn away."

My actions were seen.

"No, it's nothing," I answered.

"By the way, why is brawny man here?"

"Ah. I was on my way to take down the legendary dragon as the country up ahead calls it. Then, I saw your figure as I was competing with the wind in a running contest—"

"What about Imouto-san?"

"Imouto?"

After a short silence, "Ah, Imouto..... Imouto, right. I was thinking of going on a search for her after I defeated the legendary dragon. Hahahaha!" - He started laughing in a visibly forced way.

He totally forgot about her, huh?

It seems his head was packed by nothing but muscles.

"......How should I say, Isn't this guy unrelated to our and her business?"

"Yeah. For sure. S-should we send the outsider away?"

Both of them were clearly frightened. Well, if someone with bulging muscles like this suddenly appeared, it would be totally normal for the body to feel fear.

"Shut up!"

The brawny man flatly declared.

Hii - Two of them leaked a small voice, and I unintentionally burst into laughter from amusement.

"To be ripping money from such lovely girl, it's not a good thing to do! I will now beat your character into shape! Come!"

Saying so, the brawny man caught both them by the napes and started running.

"Eh, Wha..... that, I don't want it! Stop!"

"Anything but muscles! Anything but muscles!"

"I will teach you both the magnificence of the world of muscles! Fuhahahahaha!"

"No! Let go! Let me gooo!"

"Uwaaah! I'm sorry! I won't ever tick another person!"

"Fuhahahahahahahaha! Hahahahahahahaha!"

.....

I who was left behind, continued waving my hand towards their screaming figures.

Even after their shapes became as small as a grain of rice, the voices of agony of those two continued resounding on and on throughout the vast grasslands.

And they all lived happily ever after.

What would become of those two and the brawny man from now on?

In the end, that's a story that has no relation to me.

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